WILD RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS READILY ACCEPT ADDITIONAL NESTLINGS

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Construction of a dwelling immediately adjacent to a Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*) nesting site in central Maryland necessitated the removal of three large, downy young. These nestlings were subsequently placed into two active nests of this species located 19 km (12 mi) east of the donor site.

The initial transplant involved a nestling found uninjured beneath its nest on 9 May 1976 and held in captivity until 11 May. At 24 days of age, this hawk was placed into another nest containing two nestlings, 13 and 17 days old. In the second transplant, the remaining two young were removed from the donor site on 11 May at 22 and 26 days of age. These were placed into a foster-parent nest with a single 23-day-old nestling.

The first nestling was observed being fed by an adult on 12 May. Acceptance of the two new young at the other nest was equally rapid. Weights and wing measurements taken at that nest on 17 May showed that all three nestlings were growing normally. Occasional visits were made to both sites through 3 June. On that date both nests were occupied by only one young although two fledglings were observed flying from the first nest. Both nests were empty on 7 June, and it appeared that all six young had been raised successfully. We have found a few natural nestings in which the siblings were separated in age by as much as 11 days, but it usually occurs when four or five eggs are laid. Often not all survive in such large broods.

Interest in fostering and cross-fostering raptor eggs and nestlings has gained prominence during recent years both as a research technique and as a method of maintaining or restoring threatened populations. Our experience with the Red-shouldered Hawk indicates that fostering is a practical technique for use where such young cannot be reared to fledging by their parents.